

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1039
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S E C R E T LIBREVILLE 1184

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, INS, OAU, CG, GB
SUBJ: SHABA INVASION - INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS WITH SELECTED AFRICAN
GOVERNMENTS

REF: A) STATE 125192, B) LIBREVILLE 1179

1. DURING MEETING WITH PRESIDENT BONGO MORNING MAY 19, AMBASSADOR
MADE ALL POINTS PARA 2 REFTEL (A), STRESSING VALUE WE PLACE ON
BONGO'S VIEWS AND ADVICE AS CURRENT PRESIDENT OF OAU, AND INQUIRING
WHETHER BONGO HAD THOUGHTS OTHER THAN THOSE REPORTED REFTEL (B)
CONCERNING POSSIBLE OAU HELP TOWARD RESOLVING SHABA PROBLEM.

2. IT TURNED OUT THAT BONGO DID NOT, BUT HE WAS CAREFUL TO TELL
AMBASSADOR THAT IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS OWN STATEMENT THAT OAU
SHOULD SUPPORT AND ASSIST ZAIRE, GABON HAD AGREED PERMIT REFUELING
OF BELGIAN AIRCRAFT ENROUTE TO ZAIRE. HE THEN REFERRED TO HIS
FURTHER COMMENT THAT QUESTION OF WHETHER ZAIRE MIGHT SEEK
OUTSIDE SUPPORT WAS MATTER FOR ZAIRE TO DECIDE, SAYING THAT
WHILE HIS STATEMENT WAS RATHER ANODYNE ON THIS POINT, HE PER-
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SONALLY FELT THAT ZAIRE'S FRIENDS, AND SPECIFICALLY USG, SHOULD
SUPPORT ZAIRE STRONGLY. HE SUPPORTED USG POSITION THAT AFRI-
CANS SHOULD SOLVE AFRICAN PROBLEMS, BUT NOT EVERYONE ELSE DID
AND IN PROCESS EASTERN BLOC WAS MAKING GAINS IN AFRICA AT
EXPENSE OF USG. WHEN AMBASSADOR SUGGESTED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD
WE WERE IN FACT RESPONDING TO ZAIRIAN REQUESTS FOR SUCH THINGS
AS COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES WHICH SO FAR

AS AMBASSADOR KNEW WAS ALL ZAIRE WAS REQUESTING, HE REPLIED THAT MOBUTU KNEW SITUATION IN US AND THAT MODEST REQUEST WAS JUST TACTIC. INDEED, IF USG WANTED FIND WAY TO GET OTHER KINDS OF WAR MATERIAL TO ZAIRE, WE MIGHT THINK ABOUT USING GABON AS TRANSSHIPMENT POINT.

3. HE THEN LAUNCHED INTO LONG LAMENT (AS HE HAS BEFORE) ABOUT HOW HIS FRIEND MOBUTU RUNS HIS COUNTRY AND PARTICULARLY HIS HANDLING OF POLITICAL OPPONENTS, COMPARING IT UNFAVORABLY WITH HIS OWN REGIME IN GABON. HE WAS ESPECIALLY CRITICAL OF NGUZA KARL IN BOND CASE AND SAID HE HAD TOLD MOBUTU SO.

4. COMMENT: BONGO WAS IN GOOD FORM AND PLEASED WE HAD CONSULTED HIM. IT WAS QUITE CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT HIS STATEMENT REPORTED REFTEL (B) WAS EXTENT OF HIS THOUGHTS RE OAU INVOLVEMENT. IT WAS EQUALLY CLEAR THAT HIS REAL OR AT LEAST PREFERRED PRATICAL POSITION, WAS POSITIVE AND IMMEDIATE RESPONSE FROM ZAIRE'S EXTERNAL FRIENDS, PRINCIPALLY USG.TIENKEN

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